

## CHAPTER 2017-225

### Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 6507

An act for the relief of Angela Sanford by Leon County; providing for an appropriation to compensate her for injuries and damages sustained as a result of the negligence of an employee of Leon County; providing that certain payments and the appropriation satisfy all present and future claims related to the negligent act; providing a limitation on the payment of compensation, fees, and costs; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, on September 5, 2013, Angela Sanford was a belted, front-seat passenger in a car that was traveling on a green light through the intersection of West Tharpe Street and North Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard in Tallahassee, and

WHEREAS, at the same time, a Leon County ambulance operated by Leon County employee Benjamin Hunter entered the intersection despite a red light displayed on the traffic signal, which was clearly visible the entire time Mr. Hunter approached the intersection, and

WHEREAS, the ambulance collided with the car in which Angela Sanford was traveling and struck the passenger side door at a speed in excess of 40 miles per hour, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hunter failed to operate his ambulance in a reasonably safe manner and conducted himself in direct violation of the Leon County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating Guidelines, which specifically require all emergency vehicles to come to a full and complete stop at a red light, and

WHEREAS, although Mr. Hunter later claimed that the light was yellow, the video from the ambulance's onboard camera clearly showed that the light was red for the entire 8 seconds of the video, and

WHEREAS, the investigation conducted by the Leon County Sheriff's Office concluded that Mr. Hunter was solely at fault in the accident, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hunter also admitted, and the evidence showed, that fences, trees, and buildings at the corner of the intersection blocked the other driver's view of the ambulance as it approached the intersection, and

WHEREAS, as a result of the crash, which left her in a coma, Angela Sanford sustained life-threatening injuries, including a traumatic brain bleed that resulted in permanent cognitive and depressive disorders, a lacerated liver, a ruptured bladder, a cranial nerve injury resulting in permanent double vision, a fractured pelvis requiring hardware insertion, a fractured clavicle requiring hardware insertion, bilateral hip socket fractures requiring hardware insertion, a fractured knee, a fractured shoulder blade, 13 fractured ribs, permanent peroneal nerve palsy known as foot drop,

and numerous other injuries which have now left her totally disabled and permanently unable to return to her career as an elementary school teacher, and

WHEREAS, following mediation, on April 13, 2015, a final judgment in the amount of \$1.15 million was entered by the trial court in favor of Angela Sanford against Leon County, and

WHEREAS, Angela Sanford’s medical expenses exceeded \$744,000 at the time of the judgment, and

WHEREAS, Leon County carried liability insurance with OneBeacon Insurance Group, Ltd., a Bermuda-domiciled company, which will pay 100 percent of any appropriation up to the policy limit of \$3 million, and

WHEREAS, Leon County has already paid \$300,000 to other persons injured in this accident in satisfaction of sovereign immunity limits set forth in s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act are found and declared to be true.

Section 2. Leon County is authorized and directed to appropriate from funds of the county not otherwise appropriated, or from the county’s liability insurance coverage, and to draw a warrant in the sum of \$1.15 million, payable to Angela Sanford as compensation for injuries and damages sustained.

Section 3. The amount paid by Leon County pursuant to s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, and the amount awarded under this act are intended to provide the sole compensation for all present and future claims arising out of the factual situation described in this act which resulted in injuries and damages to Angela Sanford. Of the amount awarded under this act, the total amount paid for attorney fees may not exceed \$230,000, the total amount paid for lobbying fees may not exceed \$57,500, and the total amount paid for costs and other similar expenses relating to this claim may not exceed \$30,000.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 2, 2017.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 2, 2017.